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On the
Face of the Waters

GRACE L. SLOCUM





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ON THE FACE OF THE WATERS

AND OTHER POEMS

Grace L. Slocum



RICHARD G. BADGER
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ON THE FACE OF THE WATERS

On the Face of the Waters

On the Wreck of the Larchmont, February 11, 1907

(Voices of the Sea)

Out of the whirlwind a wailing cry
Rent the heart of the night with woe;
The stars were shaken out of the sky
And o'er the face of the waters, lo,
The angel of death went to and fro.

We have taken our toll,
Ah, bitter the dole
Of those that went down to the sea in ships.

(Voice of Man)

How long is it, O Lord, how long
Since we launched forth upon these perilous seas!
My hands are marble, carved to fit the oars,
And still I row, blind, baffled, bruised,
For at the end is life—and so I row.
Is that a spar? Ah, no, a woman's face.
Oh God, her face will haunt me till I die.
I said there was no room within the boat
And beat her off, the tender, clinging thing—
And now the boat is heavy with dead men
And through my frozen lids I see her face—
Ay, every wave is pregnant with her face.

(Voices of Women)

Love in this waste of worlds,
Where is thy face?
Wild waves have ravished me
From thy embrace.

Only within thine arms
Is life for me,
Through the deep waters, love,
I come to thee.

There was no room, they said,
Loosening my hold;
Here to the wreck I cling,
Perished with cold.

All of thy billows, Lord,
Swept over me,
All that I loved are lost
In the wild sea.

Here but a moment since,
Warm in my breast,
Close clung my little one
Lulled to sweet rest—

Or did I dream it—else
My heart will break.
Save, Lord, for I must live
Just for his sake.

Life is too cruel, Lord,
Thy waves are deep—
Close in their cold embrace
At last—we sleep.

(Voices of the Sea)

We have taken our toll,
Ah, bitter the dole
Of those that went down to the sea in ships.

(The Skipper)

The weight of all the woe of all the world
Can not outweigh the burden of my woe.
Ah God, wilt thou require them all of me
That went down to the sea in this my ship?
I knew not of the impending doom that leapt
From out the dark and grappled us, rent, tore,
And left a swirl of waters in its wake.
The boats were heavy, and the men were weak,
Death rode the wind and brooded on the wave—
Forgive me, Lord, the souls I could not save.

(Voices of the Sea)

We have taken our toll,
They have reached the goal,
The souls that went down to the sea in ships.

THE SONG OF THE MOQUER

(A lyric to the Nightingale of the South)

Moquer is the Creole name for the mocking bird of the South, a near relation of the catbird of the northern woods.

O bird with quivering throat,
Through dusk and silence float
The vibrant echoes of thy witching song;
Blest land where thou dost dwell,
Thine is the tuneful spell,
Beneath whose sway all hearts must love and long
Till all the air is yearning with desire,
And life is love and every vein a pulse of fire.

Through the odorous tropic night,
Thou flood'st the dreamy light
With liquid notes like drops of golden rain;
From out the woodland hill,
When all the world is still,
Thou pourest forth thy soul's impassioned strain
In maddening melody that wakes, as wine,
The slumberous brooding passion of the night
divine.

Song wedded with perfume,
The passion of earth's bloom,
The fire, the languor of the sumptuous South
The lyric incense swells,
Till all the rapture wells,
A flood of luscious sound, from thy small mouth;
Such music trembles on the ravished ear,
The soft air swoons and e'en the stars bend low to
hear.

The whispering woods are mute,
Whene'er thy magic flute
Is heard, in loud or soft sweet interludes,
Wooing thy fond, coy mate—
“Love, love, lost love, I wait”—
Oh, troubled one haunting the moonlit woods,
Oh, little heart panting with love's excess,
Night's heart doth ache for thy melodious distress!

Oh, soul that flames and burns!
Oh, heart that sings and yearns!
Thy passion finds an echo in my heart;
The slumbering pulse of pain
Wakens to woe again,
Or quickens with the hope thy strains impart,
Till all my being is filled with tumult sweet,
And heart and song throb each to each in rhythmic
beat.

Thou love-winged voice, thou bird,
Or spirit, darkling heard
Wooing thy woodland mate with Orphic skill!
Each sweet recurrent note,
From out thy soft, rich throat,
Paining with rapture, in my soul sings still;
I fain would give gold, glory, all the rest,
To learn thy song's heart-laden lesson, “Love is
best.”

THE TOILERS

Thou whose throne is in high heaven, dost thou
hear thy children's cries,
Cries of grief, so great, we can not see thee thro'
our tear-blind eyes.
E'en thy blue sky bending o'er us seems to mock
our anguish sore,
None save God's death-angel ever comes to ope
our prison door.

Hast no pity in thy great heart, that thy children
suffer wrong?
Wan and wistful faces lift they, crying out,— "O
Lord how long
Must we plead in vain for pity, stretching sup-
pliant hands to thee,
Plead but for our birthright, freedom, toiling in
captivity?

"Forced tho' heart and brain, rebellious, writhe
beneath its iron hand,
Still to labor on unceasing at Necessity's command
Forced to make the bricks for Pharaoh, goaded
by the whip-lash's sting,
Forced to yield submission servile unto one our
toil crowns King."

Toiling in dumb resignation just to keep the wolf
at bay;
Just to win the means of living lives more wretched
every day,
Till the famished fathers, maddened by the strife
with want and care,
Snatch the bread from out the children's mouths,
made brutes by gaunt despair.

O ye men and women who on the world's toilers
look with scorn;
Ye, who in pursuit of pleasure feast and dance
from night till morn;
Housed in halls of Orient splendor, jewels flash-
ing, eyes alight,
Till your souls are lulled to languor, steeped in
sensuous delight;

Know ye not the while ye revel in life's giddy
whirl to-day,
That some human souls are starving for the meat
ye fling away?
Starving? Starving soul and body, seeking
shelter ye withhold;
While ye dance 'mid warmth and perfume, battle
they with want and cold!

Do ye hear their cries beat upward from the depth
of human woe?
"In His Name," go seek and save them, "'Tis
enough for thee to know
"That whatsoever ye have done," saith He who
walked in Galilee,
"To the least of these my brethren, ye have done
it unto Me."

ELIZABETH'S PRAYER

(From Tannhauser)

"O blessed Virgin, harken me."

(Thee I implore, thee I implore!)

"Now from this earth, oh set me free."

(He comes no more, he comes no more.)

"Here in the dust I humbly bow,"

(Weeping my heart out at thy feet.)

"O hear my prayer, look on me now,"

(Grant that at last in heaven we meet.)

"Let me, a maiden pure and white."

(Oh keep me pure, oh keep me pure.)

"Enter into thy kingdom bright."

(Give peace for pain I now endure.)

"If vain desire and earthly longing,"

(I love him so, I love him so!)

"The sinful hopes within me thronging,"

(That wrought this woe, that wrought this
woe.)

"Have turned my thoughts from thee away,"

(Turn not from me, turn not from me!)

"Before thy blessed feet I lay."

(Bring him to thee, bring him to thee.)

"I'll wrestle with the love I cherished,"

(Oh for the shelter of his breast!)

"Until in death its flame has perished."

(Oh blessed rest, oh blessed rest.)

"If of my sin thou wilt not shrive me,"

(He did but kiss this hand, and yet)—

"Till thy eternal peace thou give me,"

(Can I forget, can I forget!)

“I vow to live and die thy maid.”
 (All earthly comfort to forego.)
“Yet in this hour, oh grant thine aid.”
 (I love him so, I love him so.)

“And on thy bounty I will call.”
 (Thee I implore, thee I implore,)
“That heavenly grace may on him fall.”
 (And I may see his face once more.)

SONYA KOVALEVSKY

Thou high-souled woman with the teeming brain,
And mind too strenuous for thy heart's best weal,
The woman pride within thee subtle, strong,
Yet yearning to be conquered, up in arms
Against the love that shook thy stormy soul;
So strong, so weak, a very woman! Still
Grasping at empty honors with the hands
That fain would clasp the knees of him thou
 lovd'st;
Had he but searched thy great soul's secret out
He would not so have ta'en thee at thy word
And left thee lonely, suffering, desolate,
Consumed with the love thou had'st forsworn,
But, all in kindness, matched his strength with
 thine,
Until, all passion spent, thy pride all gone,
The honors slipping from thy loosened grasp,
Love-conquered, thou didst kneel there at his feet;
Ay, mind and soul and body at his feet!
A suppliant for his benison. At last
Knowing the greatest good in life is love.

WOMAN AND POET

A century ago from cloistered walls
 A poet sang of love in trembling wise;
She sang as sings a bird who through the bars
 Sees its dear mate a-wing in upper skies;
She sang as one who views the promised land
 From a far hill and may not win the prize.
One heard and came for whom the world did need
 But her wan smile to make a Paradise.

Henceforth she sang of love, full-throated, strong.
 As one whose lips were touched with fire
 divine;
She sang of life, who had faced death so long,
 For lo, she had drunk deep of life's best wine;
And the whole world turned from its sordid fears
 To listen to her singing through its tears.

TO AN IDEAL

Soul of my soul, when wilt thou come to me?
Here on the confines of the real I wait.
Across the fate-fixed gulf 'tween me and thee
That fails alway our souls to separate,
I lean and cry to thee, my life, my fate,
Like some caged bird that longs to be set free
And beats 'gainst bars that guard it from its mate,
My weary soul would wing its way to thee.

Our souls were one long since in some fair clime,
Come thou my soul and make my life complete;
I hold thy heart in my heart's inmost shrine,
I hush my soul to feel its faintest beat;
Time dies by heart throbs while I wait for thee;
Mine own, mine own, when will thou come
to me?

UNCERTAINTY

I did but dream that thou didst love me dear;
I am not worthy such. It cannot be
That thou from thy soul's height shouldst look
on me,

Whose harp of life, long mute, when thou art near,
To my soul's passional vibrates sweet and clear.
Turn the blue splendor of thine eyes from me!
To look on heaven and know 'tis not for thee
Is worse than death when life and love are dear.
Leave me my dream, so sweet, so blinding sweet,
(Each string upon the harp's a vein of fire),
O thou whom my soul loves, my heart's desire!
Without thee life's least joy were incomplete;
Turn not away, look on me once again,
And in thine eyes I'll read of loss or gain.

THE MAGDALENE

(At the Door of Simon's House)

And is this Simon's house, O slave?
Ah let me in!
I seek the Christ that I may, at his feet,
Confess my sin.

He knows, the Christ of Galilee,
The way I came,
He knows how I have won the way to Him,
O'er leagues of shame.

I come from feast and revels, arms
That would detain;
From lips that laughed to scorn my penitence,
Mocked at my pain.

Here take my girdle, armlets, chain,
Take all my rings;
E'en this, set with a lordly sapphire, see
It was a King's.

This alabastron? Nay, I gave
My pearls for this,
That I might lave with precious nard the feet
I fain would kiss.

For I am weary of my sin—
Thee I implore—
I come to lay my burden at His feet,
Ope thou the door!

MARGARETHE

Since my dear love went away,
Went away from me,—
Ah, my heart is full of woe,—
Longing but for thee.

All day long I ply my task—
Thinking but of thee—
In the orchard robin's nest—
What is that to me.

All day long I work and wait,
All night long I weep,
Praying Him to pardon—and
Thee in safety keep.

Ah, my heart will break at last
With my want of thee—
Mary, Mother, bring him back,
Bring him back to me.

JUST FOR YOU

Just a bud, closefolded,
Small and sweet,
Waiting there unnoted
At your feet;

Till you stooped and plucked it,
On your breast
Bore the flower that ne'er had been
So caressed;

Warmed within your bosom,
Cherished there,
Flushed with joy because you
Thought it fair.

Slow the bud unfolded—
By your grace—
Lifted eyes of wonder,
Saw your face;

Beauty woke to being,—
A soul, too—
Slipped its silken sheath and blossomed
Just for you.

LIFE AND LOVE

(On a painting by Watts)

“The road is long and hard,” moaned Life,

“I cannot see the way.”

“Yea, hard,” quoth Love, “but at the end
Is rest and endless day.”

“The climbing feet are tender, Love,

The rocks are sharp, 'tis cold,”

“Cling close,” quoth Love, “cling closer still,
Give me thy hand to hold.”

“Lean o'er me, lift me to thy breast,

My strength is all forespent,

And sobs of anguish pierce my soul,

From those who this way went,

“And if thou leave me now, O Love,

I perish.” “Hush, I pray,

Be comforted,” quoth Love, “for I'll

Go with thee all the way.”

GALATEA

O thou. who from the mute and plastic clay
Didst fashion forth thy high heart's pure ideal,
Then, seeing the deed did far transcend the
thought,

Didst bow in adoration at the feet
Of her whose peerless beauty grew on thee
Until, impassioned far beyond a man,
Love's madness mounted to thy brain and thou,
Usurping a god's power, evoked a soul!
O thou, my maker, master, lover, thou,
Who from my lonely pedestal didst woo
And make me thine! Know'st thou hast made
thyself

Responsible for an immortal soul?
For I was marble till the slumbering heart
Throbbled to your kiss and woke to rapture wild,
Your strong, warm presence stirred my soul, I felt
The lifeblood coursing through my veins like fire;
I leaned to your caress, as some pale flower,
Denied its meed of light and warmth, uplifts
Its drooping face unto the ardent sun
And bursts its bonds for longing. Even so,
A wave of passion surged from head to feet
And broke its marble fetters. Flushed, elate,
I left my pedestal for thy embrace.

Pygmalion! Think thou that I would lose
That mad, sweet moment when thy lips did cling
To mine until they drew the soul up through;
When with tense arms each to the other clung,
Sight, speech eclipsed in joy of near delight.
I would not if I could undo the deed,
Or good or ill, which made me thine alone.

I stand before thee, proud and glad and strong
And lift my brow whereon love's seal is set,
Thine was I, e'er thy master hand had wrought
A fitting shrine for this, thy soul's ideal;
Thine am I, by the love that did evoke
The soul for that sweet, marble form divine;
Thine would I be forever, O my love!
O take me, in thy bosom shelter me
Close, safe and warm! For I, such my high fate,
Must e'er be sculptured marble but for thee.

ADA NEGRI

Child of the burning South, thou full throated
 songster,
Making all hearts ache with thy lyric rapture,
Pouring forth all thy soul's impassioned longings
 In strains melodious;

As some prisoned bird beats its bars in anguish,
So thy fettered soul pants and sighs for freedom,
Fain to stretch its wings in the empyrean,
 Soaring and singing.

Thine the strenuous voice caught afar from Dante;
Thine the lyric grace and the fire of Sappho;
And thou too, should'st be crowned with violets,
 O thou sweet singer!

Heart and soul aflame with a noble passion,
Singing through thy tears, thou hast 'roused a
 Nation;
At thy feet they bow, proud to do thee homage,
 O Ada Negri!

SONGS OF SOLOMON

Arise my love, my fairest one
Arise and come away
O let me see thy face, my sun,
Until the break of day.

O let me hear thy voice my love,
Thy voice is sweet to me,
Thou hast eyes like a brooding dove,
None can compare with thee.

Thy lips are like a scarlet thread
With tiny pearls between,
Thy soft cheek like pomegranates red,
Beneath thy hair's dusk sheen.

The kisses of thy mouth are sweet,
Sweeter than the red wine.
Make haste and come with footsteps fleet,
Beloved, art thou not mine?

Thy garden teems with spikenard sweet,
With myrrh and frankincense,
Love, o'er the splendor of thy feet
Bind sandals and come hence.

Come out upon the mountains, love,
Until the shadows flee,
O thou whom my soul loves, my dove,
Arise and come to me.

NIGHT IN THE SOUTH

The last faint light of sunset dies away
Upon the distant mountain's purple rim;
The rose-flushed cloud-wrack pales to sober gray,
The embers of the western fires grow dim.

The languorous, soft, sunny, southern day
Closes its eyes upon the changeful west,
Half hid among the poppies as they sway
In sumptuous, scarlet splendor o'er her rest.

The fire flies float and sparkle thro' the dusk;
Swift steals the twilight o'er the dewy vale,
All sweet with scent of roses and of musk,
Magnolias and jessamine, passion pale.

The few large stars burn in the purple deeps,
Like golden cressets swung aloft to illumine
Some vaulted banquet hall. The warm world
sleeps
And dreams beneath its coverlet of bloom.

THE FORSAKEN NEST

Sweet, sweet! O, when are you coming,
Flashing under the bending blue!
Here, love, I wait for you out in the gloaming,
Here in our nest in the dusk and dew.

Where, where! Are you down in the hollow,
Fluting soft in your little throat?
Say, did you call? I will follow, follow,
Lured by the love in each liquid note.

Gone, gone! O little winged rover,
Back I have flown to an empty nest;
Why do you try me so, your leal lover?
Come, little one, it is time to rest.

So happy we, all the sunlit weather,
(My heart throbs fast in a vague alarm).
Two of us here in the nest together,
Two of us here, close, safe and warm.

List, list! Do I hear you calling?
List! Do I hear the whirl of wings?
No, it is only the dry leaves falling,
Only the murmur of happy things.

Love, love! O fleet, sweet wanderer,
Hast thou forgotten the wild-wood nest?
There's an ache in my throat, I can sing no longer,
There's a dumb despair in my aching breast.

IN THE SOUTH

A Serenade

The moonlight is golden to-night, love,
Is mellow and golden and warm,
And the tropical night is a dream of delight
As I hold you here in my arm.

Your eyes are a-shine through the dusk, love,
Your lips, they are dew-sweet and warm.
Ah! this tropical night is a dream of delight,
For I fold you here in my arm.

IN MAY

Apple blossoms overhead
Violets at your feet,
Scent and bloom and rapture when
We roamed the woodland sweet.

Rose-white, turquoise, amethyst,
Flowers of every hue
Bloom and burgeon everywhere,
Beloved, just for you.

CHRISTMAS AND RELIGIOUS POEMS

THE ADORATION OF THE VIRGIN.

The wonder is not yet quite gone
From out my heart; and still
About the lowly manger bed,
The soft lights pulse and thrill.

Still through my rapt soul surges
That wondrous melody,
And hovering angels seem to wait
On His divinity.

Odors of frankincense arise,
And spices strange and sweet;
And gold and gems, the Magi brought,
Still gleam there at His feet.

What was't the shining angel said,
What time he came to me
And hailed me blest of women? "HIM
That shall be born of thee

Shall be called the Son of God Most High."
I ponder still each word.
Am I not blest indeed to be
The mother of my LORD!

Art come for saving, kingly one,
To set Thy people free?
O little one upon my knees,
My heart hath need of Thee!

Sleep, sleep, my worshipped one, while I,
Thy mother, vigil keep,
And angels wait upon thy state;
Thou holy one—sleep—sleep!

O little Son, my little Son,
Mine, from the curls of gold
To tiny, tender feet I kiss,
Dread prophecies of old

Tell of Thy passion and Thy pain
And triumph, but the time
Is yet afar. So now, little Son,
Thou art mine—mine—mine!

About the lowly manger bed
The soft lights pulse and thrill;
And all my soul before this great revealment
Adores—and is still.

A CHRISTMAS ODE

O wondrous, wondrous night
When shepherds in affright
Beheld the glory ere they heard the song;
From Heaven it flamed and thrilled
Toward them, trembling, filled
With angels floating earthward glad and strong;
Such splendor fixed their startled gaze
That their awed souls grew faint with rapture and
amaze.

There was flash of myriad wings,
Glad chords from gold harp strings,
Heaven's organ thunder through wide portals
rolled;
The choir celestial sang,
'Round the world the echoes rang,
Men welcomed yet afar, the age of gold.
The stars joined in that song sublime,
A paean of rejoicing for the Babe divine.

Kings trembled on their throne,
As yet they had not known
A greater power than theirs all homage claim;
A prophecy of might
Dawned on that solemn night
The Prince of Peace on earth began His reign;
And angels' songs the shepherds thrill,
Proclaiming, "Peace on earth and unto men good
will."

The tremulous echoes die
Along the listening sky
As seraph harps still sound from Heaven's far
height;

And men take up the strain
Heard o'er Judea's plain,
The stars e'en shine with more refulgent light,
Whereon with radiant feet the angels trod,
Ascending, their glad tidings given, up to God.

MARY (LOQUITUR)

Sleep, sleep, my little one, here at thy feet
I, Mary, kneel and worship, while o'erhead
Great angels vigil keep. My Jesus, mine
By every sacred right of motherhood;
Mine, mine, from tiny tender feet I kiss
To baby brow ringed round with curls of gold
Like to a crown.

What was't the angel said,
What time he came to me a lowly maid
And hailed me blessed of women? "Thou shalt
call
Him Jesus, and the Son of God Most High,
And of his kingdom there shall be no end."
And all my soul bowed down in reverent joy,
That I should be the mother of my Lord
And minister to him with human hands!

And all these things I pondered o'er and o'er
The while I brooded thee beneath my heart,
My Jesus, Son of God, thou holy one!
And on that wondrous night I held thee first
Within my arms, the Wise Men of the East
Did bring thee gold and frankincense and myrrh,
And hailed thee King, and worshipped at thy
feet;
And all the lowly place was filled with light,
While overhead the Star that led them shone.
And shepherds, watching by their flocks by night,
Brought tidings of a song the angels sang
Of "peace on earth and unto men good will
For unto you is born this day a King."

Sleep, sleep, my Kingly one, thy baby brow
Is yet unmeet to bear the weight of crowns.
I fain would keep thee thus, with golden hair
And wondrous, wistful eyes and clinging hands
And little feet that toddle at my call;
But thou art come, said that majestic one,
To save thy people; and my heart is sad
With prescience of a grief as yet unknown.
Vague prophecies of a Messiah to come,
“Despised, rejected, wounded for our sins,”
Blend with my dreams of Him a conqueror.
Ah, how the words pierce through my soul like
swords;
Despised, a Son of God! wounded, my Babe!
Ah, God be pitiful and let the sword
Smite me, not Him, my Son, my little one,
Whose golden head I pillow on my breast.
Sleep, sleep, my babe, thy mother vigil keeps,
And angels wait on thy divinity.
My dreams, my hopes, my life are all for thee,
Sleep, sleep, my little one, my King!

THE DREAM OF MARY

A lowly maiden bent above
The book upon her knee,
And read, in scarlet script and gold,
Great wonders that should be,
Of how a Saviour—virgin born—
Should set his people free;
Should heal the sick and raise the dead,
And make the blind to see.

Above a lowly manger bed
The hovering angels sing,
While three Kings come from out the East,
Their richest treasures bring.

He shall be called the Son of God
Most High, the prophet said,
And of His kingdom there shall be
No end. Thus as she read
A great light round about her shone
And, bowed in holy fear,
She heard within her heart the words,
The whole world thrills to hear.

Above a lowly manger bed
The hovering angels sing,
And shepherds, kneeling at his feet,
Hail him their Lord and King.

And is it meet that I should be
The mother of the Lord—
And can I bear that, too, my soul
Be pierced by the sword?
Not unto me, not unto me
The mystery and pain,
For that my son, my little son,
Be ta'en from me again!

Above a lowly manger bed
The hovering angels sing,
While cradled soft in Mary's arms
He sleeps—her Babe—a King.

“THE STAR AND THE MAGII.”

At nightfall, in the Orient,
Three wise men met, and spread their tent
 Upon a lonely plain.
Each questioned each, “What guide divine
Has brought you here, what mystic sign
 Has led you o’er the plain?”

Then spoke the Greek; “One darksome night
My cave was illumed with wondrous light,
 I heard a voice, ‘Blest thou
Thy faith hath conquered, thou shalt find
The promised One, leave all behind,
 Arise, go seek Him now.

“ ‘Ask thou, where is He that is born
King of the Jews:’ and ere the morn
 In search of Him I went.”
Another spoke; “One night afar
A radiant light, a glowing star
 Rose o’er my lonely tent.

“I knelt, my soul with awe was filled,
A voice the listening silence thrilled,
 ‘Blest art thou India’s son,
Thy love hath conquered, thou shalt see
The world’s Redeemer, and shalt be
 A witness He hath come.’ ”

“Long, long I waited,” spoke the third,
“I cried, let not my prayers unheard,
 O Lord, ascend to thee.
From star-lit deeps unfathomed there,
A glory flamed through all the air
 A dazzling mystery.

“ ‘Thy prayers have conquered; in the morn,’
I heard, ‘go seek the Saviour born
In Bethlehem of Judea.’
The prophet bards long since foretold
The birth of Him we seek. Behold
The star that led us here!”

They journeyed o’er the desert land,
Past shining wastes of golden sand
E’en to Jerusalem.
“Where is the new-born King,” they cried,
“King of the Jews?” And far and wide
Were none could answer them.

“In eastern skies we’ve seen His star
And come to worship from afar
Rich gifts for Him we bring.”
King Herod all their story heard,
And cried, “Go ye and bring me word
Where lies this new-born King.”

Without the hall, O wondrous sign,
O mystic miracle divine!
The star before them went
E’en to the cave, and stood o’erhead,
While o’er the lowly manger bed
The adoring Magii bent.

Their richest treasures they outpoured
For Him, their sovereign and Lord.
Then, ere the break of day,
Lest Herod gain the news of them
And slay the babe of Bethlehem,
They went their lonely way.

O bells chime out that wondrous tale,
O'er rock and mountain, hill and dale
 Your joyous echoes fling!
Chime in, ye bells the reign of peace,
And bid the world its tumult cease
 To hear the angels' sing!

A KING

The long, strange night is overpast,
The night of piteous suffering;
Peace dawns within my soul at last,
I cradle in mine arms—A King!

Three Wise men from the Orient came,
They made Him sumptuous offering;
Then first I knew the Child, the same
I cradled in my dreams,—a King!

Beside the lowly manger bed,
The friendly kine are slumbering;
The star-song echoes overheard;
I cradle in mine heart—A King!

SUPPLICATION

O thou who art my guide, my stay, my comfort,
Who art all earthly comforts far above,
Brood down to earth in thy divine compassion
Enfold me in the strong arms of thy love.

I lift mine eyes unto the starlit heavens,
But lo, the blinding tears blot out the stars,
The holy stars perchance the tears of angels,
Who lean and weep for us beyond earth's bars.

Who lean and pray and weep while the world-
clamor
Goes hurtling upward on its way to God;
And souls made pure through suffering, freed
from thralldom,
Flame swift along the way their feet have trod.

Thou, too, didst weep, dear Christ, on earth so-
journing,
Thou too hast known the anguish and the loss
Of all, the aching sense of desolation
That wrung thy soul when thou wert on the
cross.

Because that thou wert so divinely human,
That thou, for love of us, wert sacrificed,
I come, blind, erring, weak, a suppliant kneeling;
Leave me not hopeless O thou pitying Christ!

Draw near that so I, too, like one who loved thee
Anointing thee with tears and perfume sweet,
From my full heart, as from her vase the spike-
nard,
May pour love's incense costly at thy feet.

Aye, at thy wounded feet I kneel adoring,
Weeping my heart out at thy feet I fall;
O help me for my soul grows faint with anguish,
Turn thou not from me, thou, my hope, my all!

I need thee, Christ, come O thou sweet consoler
And whisper, "peace" unto my troubled soul,
The way is hard, the climbing feet are tender,
Fast fall the tears into my cup of dole.

And yet, O Father, wheresoe'er thou willest,
My feet shall wend, or rough or smooth the way;
But stay thou near, for without thee I perish;
By cloud or fire O lead me, Lord, I pray.

SHE IS NOT DEAD. SHE BUT SLEEPETH

“She is not dead,” thy heart’s beloved but sleep-
eth,

For lo, He giveth His beloved sleep;
O aching hearts be still, the Father knoweth,
All, all thine anguish, hush thee do not weep.

“She is not dead,” could ye have known the glory
That on her ransomed vision gleamed that day,
O hearts, ye would look up no more lamenting,
Nor rain your kisses on unanswering clay.

“She is not dead,” O strong sweet soul that
trusted
With faith so simple, childlike on His word,
Thy spirit hath returned to the Eternal,
Thine eyes behold the glory of the Lord.

“She is not dead,” she wakes to fairer being,
(The arc is rounded to a perfect whole),
“Beyond the gates,” O bliss beyond all dreaming!
Hope’s full fruition dawneth as her soul.

THE SISTER

I can see her at the window
With her eager little face,
Waiting, watching for my coming,
That gave her day added grace;
Then her wan face on the pillow,
And the little wavering hand
Seeking for the clasp of one who
Never failed to understand—
And I hear her calling, calling,
Thro' the dusk.

But the snow wreaths blur my vision
And the winds are bleak and wild
And my soul grows faint at thought of
The little, helpless child
Out there in the cold and darkness
With the snow wreaths white above,
And with no one near to comfort
Or to gladden with warm love—
And I hear her calling, calling,
Thro' the night.

Give me back the faith of childhood
With its "mansions in the skies,"
Else my brain be whelmed in blackness
By this helpless sacrifice;
Shall I know at last God's wisdom,
Know His love can never fail—
Shall I find her waiting for me
When I shall have rent the veil,
Shall I hear her calling, calling,
In the dawn?

GETHSEMANE

Must I too, drink the cup,
My soul shrinks from the draught;—
Helpless I watch by thy side,
Thro' hours with anguish fraught.—

Naught have I asked of life
But love and a place of rest;
Days of toil have I known,
Anguish of spirit, unrest.

Love brooded awhile in my heart,
And came surcease from pain;
The road to Calvary,
Must I climb so, again?

Yet—with dumb lips I pray,
As dawn creeps over the hill,
My face on the still, cold face,
Father—not as I will.

THE VISION OF THE MADONNA

(*Mary Loquitur*)

Methought an angel came to me and said,
"Fear not, thou hast found favor in the sight
Of God, and art among all women blest."

* * * * *

And then, as in a vision, I beheld
Time like a scroll unrolled before mine eyes.
Upborne, as if on angels' wings o'er earth,
I watched the swift flight of the burdened years,
With all the wonder and the suffering
And final triumph of the Holy One.
And first I saw below a bare, white plain
And shepherds watching by their flocks by night.
A wondrous light all round about them shone,
A path of glory leading up to Heaven,
That pulsed from rose to silver, as it were
A mighty heart-beat throbbing through the world.
Then down the path of light an angel came,
Clothed all in glittering raiment wonderful,
And to the startled shepherds thus he spake,—
"Fear not, I bring good tidings of great joy,
For unto you is born this day a King
In Bethlehem, a Saviour! Christ the Lord!"

* * * * *

Then from the star-lit deep, lo, hosts of Heaven
Sail in soft splendor down the sea of light,
Their wings all glistening with the sheen celestial,
As earthward swift they take their radiant flight;
While choiring seraphs lean o'er barriers golden,
And seraph harps still sound from Heaven's far
height.

The air is all a-quiver with the rapture
That overflowed from founts of joy on high;

All palpitating with the hues resplendent
Flashed forth from wings that beat a-down the sky,
Soft emerald, rose and amethyst and golden,
That in a mist of splendor melt and die.

And all the night is filled with music glorious,
The startled shepherds' souls with rapture fill;
The winds are hushed, the stars bend low to listen,
And the whole world is wrapped in wonder still,
To hear the echo of that song proclaiming,—
“Peace on the earth, and unto men good-will!”

* * * * *

The light thrilled toward me, flamed beyond, I felt
The touch of angels' wings upon my brow;
And lo, a strange, swift rapture stirred my soul
And all of thought and being merged in this,
That in mine arms I held a new-born Babe,
Whose eyes, all wonder-filled, gazed into mine;
(A dream within a dream, yet not a dream,
But truth revealed. God's way!) I clasped it
close

And earthward looked once more. And then,
behold,

I, in the spirit, saw myself in flesh,
And in mine arms I held a new-born Babe,
And in my heart a voice said, “Lo, this is
The Christ-Child, the Messiah long foretold
By prophets to redeem the world from sin.”
And all my soul bowed down in reverence glad
Before this Godsent One, that yet was mine
By every sacred right of motherhood.
A radiant light lit all the lowly place,
Such light as mortal ne'er had seen before;
And in the midst of that effulgence, soon
Appeared three Wise Men from the Orient,
Bearing rich presents from their teeming lands.
Before the Infant Christ they humbly bow,

Pouring their offerings at His sacred feet—
Gold, frankincense and myrrh, and treasure rare
As would befit the ransom of a King.

* * * *

O'er the lowly manger bed
Magi bent adoring,
While the Star stood overhead,
Wondrous light downpouring.

Guided by that new-born Star,
O'er the desert faring,
Came they from the East afar,
Richest treasure bearing.

'Twas a child's cry wakened them
From their mystic dreaming,
And a child's hand beckoned them,
In that new Star gleaming.

Low they bow in reverence,
Him as Lord adoring,
Gold and myrrh and frankincense
At His feet outpouring.

* * * *

And then lest Herod should the tidings gain,
And slay the Child, the Wise Men went their way.
And in mine arms still smiled the Babe unharmed,
For they, His earthly guardians, warned of God,
Went into Egypt and abode a time
And came not back again till Herod's death.

And when the time was ripe—I saw Him come
For baptism unto one who cried, "Behold
The Lamb of God." And Him he did baptize,
And then a radiance hovered o'er His head,
Like to a dove with wings of lambent flame,
As if it were indeed the spirit of God
Come down from Heaven, to consecrate and bless.

Next saw I Him in wilderness afar
For many days communing with His God.
The nascent consciousness of that great power,
The heritage of His divinity,
O'erwhelmed His untried soul; though sore beset
With temptings from without and from within,
He would not use that power divine to stay
One pang of hunger, thirst or mortal pain;
That power supernal did He consecrate
To others' good, His mission high on earth,
And from the wilderness went forth to save.

I saw Him heal the sick, the lame, the blind.
They crowded round Him for a look, a touch
Of gracious healing or to list to words
With wondrous wisdom fraught; and once
O mystic miracle, O deed divine,
I saw Him raise the dead! at His command,
"Come forth!" as at the sound of the last trump,
The dead arose and stood before Him there.
And some who came to scoff bowed down to Him
And cried, "This is the Christ that was to be."
And there were many who believed on Him
And followed Him throughout all Galilee.

And ever in mine arms I held the Babe
Close clasped upon my breast, and in its eyes
I read what things should come to pass on earth.

I saw Him at a feast in Simon's house,
A Pharisee! Who, though his bidden guest,
Yet with cold courtesy did welcome Him
Nor seated Him among the honored ones.
On sumptuous couches, they recline at ease,
On sumptuous couches, carved from cedarn wood,
Encrusted thick with gold and ivory,
O'erspread with rugs and silken cushions soft.

The lights illumine the lofty banquet-hall
From candelabra wrought of beaten gold,
And antique cressets swung by golden chains
From the high ceilings' gilded tracery;
Soft lights that send back opalescent rays
From walls inlaid with pearl and ivory,
Or sleep in folds of golden fulness 'mong
The woven arras, all of Tyrian hue
And white, green, scarlet, worked with flowers of
gold,
With linen cords and rings of silver hung
From fluted columns hewn of porphyry,
Rose-flushed or vari-colored, and the rare
Numidian marble tinct with rose and gold.
Along the polished board of citron wood
Gleam myrrhine vases, cups of ruby glass,
Gold goblets all embossed with precious stones,
And crystal beakers filled with sparkling wines
And sherbets cooled in snows from Lebanon.
The glittering canisters are filled with bread,
The lustrous salvers glow with delicacies,
And baskets of wreathed silver are heaped high
With luscious dainties of the Orient:
Pomegranates with their glowing hearts of fire,
And grapes like globes of wine, and figs and dates
And lucent amber of the citron gourd.

Then in the midst of all the splendor came
A woman: who, unbidden to the feast,
Unheeding scornful looks or cold disdain,
(That she, polluted one, should enter there,)
Sought out the Christ of Galilee and bowed
In passionate adoration at His feet,
And on them rained her tears of penitence
And kisses warm from her great, fiery heart.
She flung the rose-wreaths from her beauteous
head,

That erst adorned her for some revelry,
Unloosed the dusky splendor of her hair
And wrapped those dear feet in the silken warmth,
Anointing them with precious spikenard till
The air was heavy with that fragrance rare,
While on the mosaic floor unheeded now
The rose-veined shards of alabaster gleamed.
(Cold Pharisee, thou ill couldst comprehend
Such love as she hath lavished on thy Lord!
Nor couldst thou comprehend the gracious words
Of Him who spake as never yet man spake):—
“I entered in thy house thy bidden guest,
Thou gavest me no water for My feet,
Lo, she hath washed My tired feet with her tears
And dried them with that wealth of unbound hair;
No kiss of greeting gavest thou to Me
But lo, she hath not ceased to kiss My feet;
Nor yet with oil didst thou anoint My head,
With precious nard she doth anoint My feet;
She hath loved much and is forgiven much.”

No scorn could hurt her now, for lo, the Master
saith unto her,
“Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace, thy sins
are all forgiven.”

I saw Him as He walked in Galilee,
Teaching and healing as was e'er His wont,
Feeding the multitude upon the Mount
The while He taught them of the Bread of Life.
Thrilled the low music of His voice appealing,
“Come unto Me and I will give you bread,
Come unto Me, all ye that thirst or hunger,
Take, eat, with bread from Heaven ye shall be fed.
“Take thou no thought for what the morrow
bringeth,

What ye shall eat or drink from day to day,
Your heavenly Father careth for the sparrows,
O troubled ones, are ye not more than they?

“Is not the life more than the food or raiment?
Consider thou the lilies how they grow;
They toil not, yet are they arrayed in splendor,
Doth not your needs much more the Father
know?”

Thrilled the low music of His voice appealing,
To every heart with sin and care oppressed,
“Come unto Me, ye that are heavy-laden,
Come unto Me and I will give you rest.”

I saw Him on the Sea of Galilee
Alone with His disciples in a ship,
Wearied and worn He lay in slumber deep,
Nor heard the rising wind, nor felt the spray,
Nor even roused when with fierce fury raged
The storm upon the deep; no, not until
The cry of His disciples pierced His heart—
“O save us or we perish, Master, save!”
Then, rising, He rebuked them tenderly,
“O ye of little faith, why so dismayed?”
And standing there in lowly majesty,
His golden hair, His garments all wind-tossed,
High o’er the roar of waters rose His voice
Commanding, “Peace, be still,” and all was still.
Alike in far blue dome and calm blue deep,
Like points of golden fire the great stars burned;
And all their souls with awe and wonder filled.

* * * * *

“Peace!” and the wild waters rest,
Cradling the ship on their breast
Like a dove with its wet wings out-spread;
“Peace!” and from fear-stricken hearts,

All the wild terror departs
And the stars shine in God's blue o'erhead.

"Peace!" lo, the waters have heard,
Hushed are the waves at His word,
All still rolls the turbulent sea;
Bright gleam His garments afar,
The light of His face like a star
Shines out over dark Galilee.

Toilers o'er life's troubled sea
Peace He doth give unto thee,
O come unto Him, come and rest!
Cease from your warring and strife,
Turn from the doubts that are rife
And lay your tired head on His breast.

"Peace!" for He knoweth thy need,
Over life's billows He'll lead
And whisper thy soul, "Peace, be still."
So be fulfilled through all time,
That song of the angels, sublime
Of "Peace upon earth and good will."

II

I saw Him in the midst of a glad throng
As He rode toward Jerusalem, and lo,
They lay their garments down and strew green
palms
O'er all the way as for a conqueror.
And when the quiet hour of eve was come
I saw Him wend His way to Bethany,
Weary and worn, heart-hungry for a word
Of human sympathy from those He loved.
And one there was with wondrous, wistful eyes
That sought His face in love unquestioning,

Until her heart o'erflowed and on His head
She poured the spikenard, very precious while
Her tears fell with't, the chrism of love! nor knew
She did anoint Him for His burial.

I saw Him in an humble room, alone
With his disciples at the Paschal feast;
And when he blessed the simple bread and wine
And gave them, speaking solemn mystic words,
It seemed to them a sacrament divine
As He had given them of His very self.
And all their souls were filled with grief and awe
So great, they scarce could comprehend His words.
Then, lifting up His eyes to Heaven He prayed,
"Oh, Father, glorify Thy Son! for now
I come to Thee, but these are in the world,
Keep through Thy name those whom Thou gavest
Me
That they may be with me hereafter and
Behold the glory which I had with Thee
Before the world was! Not alone for them
But for all those who shall believe on Me
I pray, that they may all be one, as Thou,
O Father, art in Me and I in Thee."

Then out into the solemn hush of night,
Beneath the olives' moonlight-silvered leaves,
They followed Him unto Gethsemane.

I saw Him in the garden praying long,
And heard the broken wail of agony—
"O that thou wouldst remove this cup from Me."
(And all my soul was wrung with anguish sore.
I could not see Him suffer so alone,
I came and soothed Him, though He knew me not,
But thought an angel ministered to Him.)

I saw Him on the way to Calvary!
And now mine eyes were blinded by my tears.
O sad, sad sight, to see Him led to death
By those He came to save! O blind of heart,
Ye blind who thought to see Him come a King,
As earthly conqueror, King of earthly realms!
And when He came at last in humble guise
His own, to whom He came, received Him not.
He was an-hungered, and ye gave no meat,
And thirsty, and ye gave Him naught to drink,
Sick and in prison, and ye came not nigh,
And now He goes to death! O faithless ones,
Who quail before that thought, do ye not know
That death is but a step to higher life
Where Christ, this Saviour of the world, shall
reign?
Ye cannot see, but will ye not believe?
Ye saw the Star that heralded His birth
To shepherds watching by their flocks at night;
That led the wisdom of the East to lay
Its treasures and its worship at His feet;
Ye saw the Dove with wings of silver light
Come down from Heaven to rest upon His head;
Ye saw Him heal the sick and raise the dead
And still the tempest; ay, and there are some
Who saw him all transfigured on the Mount;
And still ye doubt, O unbelieving ones!
He came to save you and ye mocked at Him!
Know ye it is your Saviour ye have scourged?
His blood be on your heads as ye have said.
The end is not. I see behind the veil.
Still in my arms I clasp my Babe and read
Within its eyes, all deep with suffering,
God's meaning underneath the mystery.

Once more I earthward turned my yearning gaze
With prescience of a grief as yet unknown.

I saw Him crucified! O cruel sight!
And when uplifted there upon the Cross,
I heard Him pray that prayer divine, "Forgive
Them, Father, for they know not what they do."
And yet they feared they knew not what, for lo,
A gathering gloom obscures the noonday sky,
A sudden tremor shakes the solid earth:
Then from the swaying cross there came a cry of
desolation,
"Eloi, eloi (my God, my God), why hast Thou Me
forsaken?"
And hearts that erst were hot with hate now thrill
with deep compassion,
And dumb with fear, enwrapt in gloom, they wait
the consummation.
They wait, and all creation waits the doom of its
creator
In breathless silence; then, once more, heard
through the thunderous darkness,
The Saviour speaks—"Into Thy hands I yield my
spirit, Father."
And last a cry of ecstasy and triumph—"It is
finished."
Ay, finished! and the earth did quake, the heavens
did speak in thunder;
'Tis finished! and behold the temple veil is rent
asunder,
And rent for aye the veil that hid from mortal
eyes the Father,
'Tis finished, the Redemption of the world.

And lo, mine arms were empty! then I knew
The meaning of those words mysterious
That Simon spake, what time I brought the child
Into the temple to present Him there—
"The sword shall also pierce through thine own
soul."

I stretched forth empty arms, in vain! a wave
Of mighty anguish swept across my soul.
Thou whom my mother heart had hoped to see
The ruler of His people, the Messiah
Who was to come, the chosen one of God,
My dreams, my hopes, my life, were all for thee!
Thou whom I used to hold close to my heart,
And whisper of the wonders of Thy birth,
And of the promised wonders yet to come,
In sweet communings in the twilight hour,
Here at Thy cross I bow in agony!
Almost the vision fails; in this blind hour
Brought face to face with woman's deepest woe,
Almost I doubt Thee, God omnipotent.
Yet, O forgive! each pang He suffered there
Has pierced my soul as with a sword. Yet still
My faith looks up to thee. Thou knowest all.
Still dimly through the veil I see thy truth
Clear shining as the sun, and know all things
Shall work together for the final good.

* * * * *

O aching hearts, be still
And learn the Father's will
That so on earth His name be glorified;
O trusting hearts of earth
That gloried in the birth
Of Him who on the cross for your sakes died,
Hold fast your faith upon His spoken word,
Thine eyes shall yet behold the glory of the Lord.

While yet the soldiers kept
Guard over Him who slept
The whole earth trembled and my watchful eyes
Beheld ere break of day,
The great stone rolled away

By angels winging from the wakening skies;
While yet afar came Mary Magdalene
And others, knowing not what wonder there had
been.

Ere yet the night was spent
Unto the tomb they went
All sorrowful for Him their souls adored;
Bearing rare spices hence
Myrrh and sweet frankincense,
To anoint the precious body of their Lord;
But lo, He whom they sought, mighty to save,
Hath won the victory over death—and o'er the
grave!

* * * * *

For as I watched (O vision glorious
That floods my being with the light of truth,
Uplifts my fainting heart to heights serene
Where in the great light of God's infinite love,
My spirit breathes the breath of the divine
And yearns to be at one with the Eterne!)
I saw Him standing by the sepulchre
My Babe, my Saviour, and my risen Lord!
Transfigured with the glory all divine
Before which angels bow.

With one low cry
Of grief and rapture blent, "Rabboni, Lord!"
She with the sad, sweet eyes, who loved Him so,
Knelt at His feet there sobbing passionately,
Till at His bidding she arose and went
Her way to Galilee with swift, glad feet,
To tell the joyous tidings, "Christ is risen."

Aye, He is risen indeed, and my stilled soul
Is filled with rapture all unspeakable!
Thou who fulfill'dst thy mission unto death,
O not in vain thine anguish, not in vain

Thy triumph over sin, death and the grave!
 Thy words prophetic time shall yet fulfil—
 “Lo, I, if I be lifted up, will draw
 All men unto Me.” Ay, and they shall learn
 To look to Thee and live, to drink Thy cup,
 To die for Thy name’s sake, their faces lit
 With peace divine reflected from Thy face!
 Yea, in Thy name shall mighty domes be built;
 And at Thy name all hearts shall bow the knee
 And worship Thee in love and unity.
 Then from Thy throne of glory Thou shalt see
 Of Thy soul’s travail and be satisfied,
 For all the world shall own Thee Lord and King.

* * * * *

“My soul doth magnify the Lord, behold
 In God, my Saviour, hath my spirit rejoiced;
 For He, the Lord, He that is mighty, hath
 Regarded His handmaiden’s low estate,
 And unto me done great and wondrous things;
 And holy is His name! behold, henceforth
 All generations me shall call blessed.
 His mercy is on them that fear His name;
 With arm of strength He doth resist the proud;
 He hath put down the mighty from their seat
 And hath exalted them of low degree;
 Lo, He hath filled the hungry with good things
 And empty hath He sent the rich away;
 Lo, He hath helped His servant Israel
 In the remembrance of His covenant,
 As He spake to our Father—Abraham
 And to His seed forever.”

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